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ABSTRACT

Modeled after the Bay Area Writing Project, the Inland Area Writing Project has for the past 6 years identified exemplary teachers of writing and trained them to be teacher/consultants who can plan and implement their own staff development programs in the teaching of writing. The training program consists of an intensive 5-week summer workshop and a subsequent September-through-June followup that assists the new consultants as they schedule, plan, implement, and evaluate their staff development presentations. In 1977, a pilot study of the project's first year revealed a number of concerns, both among the participants and among the project coordinators. They questioned whether the summer session should be less participant centered and more syllabus directed. They wondered whether more experienced teachers needed the same kind of program as did less-experienced teachers, and they questioned whether all participants became effective consultants by merely attending the summer workshop. These concerns formed the basis for further research conducted during the next 5 years. Results from these studies suggested that teachers did benefit from development programs that focused on their needs and desires; teachers with more experience had more positive attitudes toward staff development than did teachers with fewer years of experience; teachers with internal locus of control had more positive attitudes than did teachers with external locus of control; and instructional techniques, such as role-playing, had little or no effect on teacher perceptions of themselves as consultants. (HOD)

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RESEARCH ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT: THE INLAND AREA WRITING PROJECT

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The Inland Area Writing Project, modeled after the Bay Area Writing Project, has for the past six years identified exemplary teachers of writing and trained them to be teacher-consultants who can plan and implement their own staff development programs in the teaching of writing. The training program consists of an intensive five- week summer workshop and a subsequent September-through-June followup that assists the new consultants as they schedule, plan, implement and evaluate their staff development presentations, which vary in format from half-hour demonstrations at professional conferences to thirty-hour extension courses offered either on university or school district sites. The research reported in this paper was conducted during the summer sessions, and the findings have not only specific significance for planners of writing projects but also general significance for planners of any kind of staff development.

The Project's First Year: A Possible Pilot Study

In 1977, the Project's first year, 25 secondary school English teachers were selected through an application and interview process to participate in the seminal 5-week summer workshop. Following Bay Area Writing Project guidelines, participants gave oral presentations and

CS207261

demonstrations of teaching, engaged in personal writing, and developed a position paper on the teaching of writing. Though the program was to be given on a university or college site, the university professor coordinating the program was to be a facilitator, not an instructor. The novelty and tension of the program created a number of concerns, both among the participants and among the project coordinators.

1. Should the summer session be less participant-centered and more syllabus-directed?
2. Do more experienced teachers need the same kind of program as do less-experienced teachers?
3. Do all participants necessarily become effective consultants merely by attending the summer workshop?

These concerns formed the basis for a research agenda for the next five years.

Related Research in Staff Development

With respect to participant-centered versus content-centered staff development, Berman and McLaughlin (1977) and McLaughlin and Berman (1977) in reviewing 293 federally funded staff development sessions, found that the programs that survived after funding ceased were those that were developmental (participant-centered) rather than deficit (content-centered). In other words, programs where teachers set their own goals, participated in planning sessions, and helped develop program materials were longer lived than those that superimposed a structure from outside. These findings were reiterated by Hall and Loucks (1978), who urged that teacher concern for innovation goes

through a sensitive seven-stage process, from awareness to internatization.

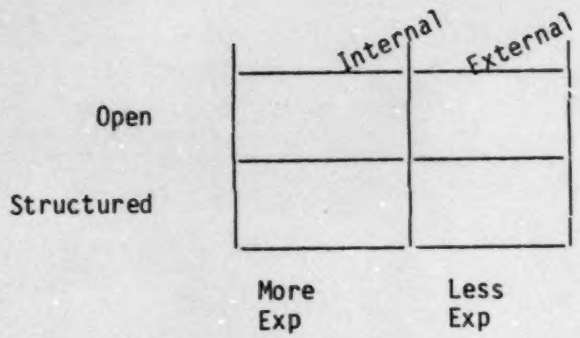
Concerning length of teaching experience, evidence was contradictory. Berman and McLaughlin (1977) found that the amount of teaching experience was inversely proportional to willingness to accept innovation. Joyce (1977), on the other hand, found that teachers with considerable experience profited from staff development at teacher centers.

Concerning the ability to consult, investigators felt that an individual's locus of control would be a crucial variable. Since staff development deals with changes, a consultant's view of how that change takes place--from outside influence (external) or from personal conversion (internal)--might affect that consultant's success.

1978 Summer Project: Teaching Model X

Experience X Locus of Control

During the 1978 summer project, investigators sought to determine the main effects and interactions among (a) developmental vs. deficit programs, (b) years of experience; and (c) locus of control. Using a 2 x 2 x 2 design for analysis of variance, 24 participants were randomly assigned to treatments; a developmental (open and participant-centered) program and a deficit (structured and syllabus-centered) program. In addition to random assignment, participants were stratified initially by years of experience, and subsequently by locus of control (Rotter, in Lefaourt, 1976).



To insure equality of random groups, the Methodology Inventory of Composition Teaching Behaviors was administered (Donlan, 1979), revealing no significant differences. Three observations of each group, using FIA, indicated a preponderance of student talk in the developmental group and a preponderance of teacher talk in the deficit group. Analysis of a 25-item three-scale program evaluation form revealed (1) teachers evaluated the developmental program significantly higher than they did the deficit program and (2) that more experienced teachers evaluated the program significantly higher than did the less experienced teachers. Locus of control had no effect. There were no interactions (Donlan, 1980).

1980 Summer Project:

Teaching Model X Locus of Control

Since the results of the 1978 study favored the developmental (open) model, investigators maintained it. However, one variable in the open program was manipulated: the manner in which summer participants evaluated each other's presentations. Since the project

trained consultants, it was felt that "real-life" situations could be recreated through role playing (Shaftel and Shaftel, 1967). As each participant would make an oral presentation, the other participants would assume roles described on cards they drew at random. Discussion and evaluation would be done "in-role." A study would measure the main effects and interactions between treatment and locus of control using a 2 x 2 design for analysis of variance.

Twenty-seven teacher participants were randomly assigned, stratified initially by years of experience, and, subsequently by locus of control, to two treatments: experimental (role-laying) and control (natural discussion and evaluation). Again, to insure equality of groups, the Methodology Inventory was administered, again with no significant differences. Observations were made to determine that the treatments were maintained. Results from the 25-item 3-scale program evaluation form revealed no significant treatment differences, but significant differences in locus of control. Teachers with internal locus of control evaluated the program significantly higher than did teachers with external locus of control. In addition, there was a significant treatment x locus interactions: externals favored role-playing (Donlan, in press[a]; Donlan, in press[b]).

1981 Summer Project:
Replication and Intensification

The 1980 experiment was replicated in the 1981 summer workshop. Investigators felt that the lack of significant differences in treatment effect might have resulted from insufficient training in

role-playing. For the 1981 summer program, participants in the experimental group would be given formal training in how to role-play (after Shaftel and Shaftel, 1967). This study would determine the main effects and interactions between treatment and locus of control, using a 2 x 2 design for analysis of variance.

Eighteen teachers were randomly assigned (stratified by experience and locus of control) to 2 treatments, experimental (role-playing) and control. To insure equality between groups, the Methodology Inventory was administered, revealing no significant differences. Observations insured that treatments were being maintained. Results from the 25-item 3-scale program evaluation form revealed no significant differences and no interactions.

Discussion

The three studies suggest certain patterns that may develop in staff development programs.

1. Teachers prefer and, hopefully, benefit from developmental programs that focus on their needs and desires. This may account for the nonsignificant differences between the developmental treatment groups in the 1980 and 1981 studies.
2. Teachers with more experience may have more positive attitudes toward staff development than do teachers with fewer years experience. These disparate attitudes should be understood by program planners--and dealt with.
3. Teachers with internal locus of control may have more

positive attitudes toward staff development than do teachers with external locus of control. In effect, staff development serves well those who see themselves as controlling their own changes.

4. Instructional techniques, such as role-playing, may have little or no effect on teachers' perceptions of themselves as consultants.

Limitations of This Research

Any generalizations from these studies are tenuous. First of all, writing projects tend to be highly selective. Teachers who participated in this research were recognized by their administrators as being effective professionals.

Second, confining the research to the summer sessions precludes the experimental study of longitudinal effect. That teachers change their attitudes long after the program's conclusion is a strong possibility, but a phenomenon difficult to measure. That an inexperienced teacher-turned-consultant manages to give successful workshops might be attributed to events other than the summer workshop. At least during the summer workshop, variables can be controlled to a certain extent.

Third, instruments used for research and evaluation have tended to be self-reports. As such, they deal more with preception than with reality. Yet, it is difficult to find an "objective" measure for the writing project's purposes.

Six-Year Evaluation Study

Currently in progress is a six-year evaluation study of the Inland Area Writing Project. The first phase of the study attempts to determine the impact of the project on (a) teacher career development, (b) individual school staff development, and (c) district level staff development. A second, more crucial, yet more difficult phase is to assess the project's impact on student achievement.

It is bromidic to emphasize the importance of staff development in an age of declining student population, declining job markets for educators, and teacher burn-out. Yet, the philosophy underlying the planning and execution of staff development can make the difference between success and failure.

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